

## DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 186 741

CE 025 397

AUTHOR Esser, Thomas J.  
TITLE Gathering Information for Evaluation Planning.  
INSTITUTION Wisconsin Univ. - Stout, Menomonie. Dept. of Rehabilitation and Manpower Services. Materials Development Center.  
SPONS AGENCY Rehabilitation Services Administration (DHEW), Washington, D.C.  
PUB DATE Mar 80.  
GRANT DHEW-RSA-12-P-55307/5  
NOTE 63p.: For a related document see CE 025 400.  
AVAILABLE FROM Materials Development Center, Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute, University of Wisconsin--Stout, Menomonie, WI 54751 (\$2.00)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.  
DESCRIPTORS Adjustment (to Environment); Adults; \*Biographical Inventories; Data Analysis; Data Collection; \*Disabilities; Educational Background; Evaluation Criteria; \*Individual Characteristics; Individualized Programs; \*Information Utilization; Interviews; Models; Occupational Aspiration; Participation; Questionnaires; Social Adjustment; Vocational Education; \*Vocational Interests; \*Vocational Rehabilitation; Work Experience  
IDENTIFIERS \*Vocational Evaluation

## ABSTRACT

This publication is intended to provide rehabilitation professionals with information about and structure for conducting the client information-gathering process prior to beginning vocational evaluation services. It can be divided into two major parts: (1) presentation of information and a model for structuring the information-gathering process and (2) demonstration of analysis of the information collected to develop "referral" or evaluation criteria. A section on gathering information suggests possible questions for seven major information categories found most useful in vocational planning--demographic-identifying information, work history, education and training, personal and social adjustment, disability, vocational interests and goals, and job-seeking experience. Other topics include client understanding and involvement in the evaluation process, reasons for and structuring of the initial or diagnostic interview, and development and use of a structured information form. The twenty-one-page Materials Development Center Structured Information Form is provided and its use described. The section on analysis follows a brief discussion with example answers to questions on the information form and evaluation questions (information needs), which were developed from the information. (CE 025 400 provides information on developing individual evaluation plans from these questions.) Tentative steps for using the information in this publication conclude the publication. (YLB)

ED186741

# GATHERING INFORMATION FOR EVALUATION PLANNING

By

Thomas J. Esser

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,  
EDUCATION & WELFARE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS  
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

R. Fry

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES  
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Materials Development Center  
Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute  
University of Wisconsin-Stout  
Menomonie, Wisconsin 54751

March, 1980

ADDITIONAL COPIES OF THIS PUBLICATION MAY BE  
PURCHASED FROM MDC FOR \$2.00 PER COPY

## Table of Contents

### Page

- Introduction	1
- Why is Information Important	2
- General and Specific Referral Questions	4
- Information Categories	6
- Demographic/Identifying Information	6
- Work History	7
- Education and Training	9
- Personal and Social Adjustment	10
- Disability	13
- Vocational Interests and Goals	15
- Job Seeking Experience	16
- Client Understanding and Involvement	18
- The Initial Interview	18
- Development and Use of a Structured Information Form	20
- The Structured MDC Information Form	23
- How to Use the MDC Form	23
- Who Should Complete the Form	25
- Blank Form	27
- Analyzing Information In Order to Develop Evaluation Questions	48
- Examples of Additional Evaluation Questions	49
- Suggestions for Using This Material	57
- Summary	58
- References	60

## Gathering Information for Evaluation Planning

### Introduction

This publication has been written for one basic purpose: to provide rehabilitation professionals with information about and a structure for conducting the client information-gathering process prior to beginning vocational evaluation services. Although the emphasis is on the information-gathering process as related specifically to vocational evaluation, the material presented is relevant to the planning and selection of services throughout the vocational rehabilitation delivery system. Ideally, referrals for services should be accompanied by documentation of all important client information including medical, psychological, social, educational, and vocational data. Going one step further, the referral source should specify the referral questions that are to be answered through the requested service. Counselors and referring agents from state vocational rehabilitation and other public agencies have a responsibility to make referrals for rehabilitation services based on the identified needs of their clients. This is necessary in order to provide effective rehabilitation services as well as to utilize the agency's resources efficiently. In order for "good" referral decisions to result, an extensive information-gathering and exchange process between the counselor and the client must be conducted prior to making the referral decision. In other words, for an appropriate referral to result, the counselor and the client together must first determine the information that they need in order to develop an effective rehabilitation program. The referral decision will then be based on meeting these specific, predetermined information needs. However, due to a variety of reasons, requests for facility services by referring agencies are often accompanied by sketchy client information and lacking in specificity as to what the referring agent is looking for and expects from the requested service. This lack of specificity may also be transferred to the disabled client, who many times will arrive at the facility not knowing why he or she has been referred, as well as what can be expected from the facility.

When an unclear or poorly defined referral is received, the burden often falls on the facility to gather the information necessary for planning the delivery of the requested service in a manner which will most effectively meet the individual needs of the client and the referral source. This document, therefore, is designed to assist vocational evaluators and other facility personnel in conducting the information-gathering process in a structured and efficient manner. This is not meant to imply that this document presents the "only" or best approach which should be used by every facility; rather there are many approaches which when used effectively, can contribute to the efficient delivery of individualized client services.

### A Few Words About the Content

This publication essentially can be divided into two major parts. The title emphasizes the activity of collecting client information for use in planning, and a substantial part of the manuscript addresses this activity, including presentation of a model for structuring the information-gathering process.

LS

However, the activity of collecting information for information's sake has no merit in and of itself since very little is directly contributed to the rehabilitation of individual clients as a result. Therefore, it is only when the information is used to improve the planning and subsequent delivery of services that its collection can be truly justified. Thus the manner in which information is used is much more important than is the activity of information collection. The most important part of this publication then is the second part, where it is demonstrated how the collected information is analyzed in order to develop "referral" or evaluation questions. A number of examples are presented to better illustrate this process and its underlying concepts. These questions, in turn, are used for structuring the individualized, written evaluation plan. As a result of understanding "why" and "how" client information is collected and analyzed in this fashion, the planning process leading to the delivery of effective, individualized client services is greatly facilitated.

### Why Is Information Important?

There is one school of thought which maintains that prior review of referral information results in bias towards the client, thereby, effecting the subsequent delivery of services. Proponents of this philosophy would suggest that evaluation of an individual should be based on current, observed performance only, and not on a review of past history and performance. Although there is certainly considerable truth and merit to this position, there are also some serious limitations.

People learn from their experiences; therefore, a person's current performance is a culmination of previous learning and experience. For those individuals who perform well, past history may not be too revealing and/or important. However, for those who have had difficulties in performance or who have had limited experiences, past history is extremely important in understanding the individual and in assisting that person to identify his or her needs. In rehabilitation facility programs, this is the person who is most often referred for services, as opposed to those individuals who are successful performers. Even for individuals who have become traumatically disabled and who had been gainfully employed, review of referral information is useful in identifying individual strengths, assets, and interests which can be helpful to the individual in his or her rehabilitation.

Finally, it should be remembered that any single, limited period of evaluation is only a small sample of an individual's behavior and performance. Depending on the skills of the evaluator, the results of an evaluation may be extremely accurate or extremely misleading. Therefore, the evaluation results, when compared with other previously developed information, will yield a comprehensive picture which is likely to be more accurate than that produced without having the information available. People do change, and these changes can be better understood and appreciated in light of an individual's past performance. The possibility of evaluator bias, although it can and does occur, is outweighed by the advantages which a professional evaluator can obtain for his clients through the intelligent, structured use of referral information.

The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) recognizes the availability of complete referral information as being crucial to the planning and delivery of effective rehabilitation facility services. CARF Standards 3.2 through 3.2.1.3 address this need as follows:



3.2 The facility shall be responsible for services as required for diagnosis and evaluation, treatment or training appropriate to the needs of its clientele and the purposes of the facility, and for referral or placement and follow-up. It shall:

3.2.1 Establish and follow policies and procedures for intake.

3.2.1.1 The facility shall have clearly written criteria for admission.

3.2.1.2 All referrals shall be screened by review of application forms, review of referral information, and whenever feasible, by personal interview.

3.2.1.3 The establishment of a diagnosis, evaluation, and determination of the problem for which the individual was referred shall precede initiation of any treatment or training service. This process should include consideration of the individual's physical, psychological, social, vocational, and educational status.

This series of standards is incorporated in another extremely important standard which provides the basis for the development of the individualized evaluation plan. Standard 3.4.3.1.3 reads as follows:

Based on referral information, the initial interview, and the stated purpose of the evaluation, a specific written evaluation plan for each individual shall be developed. This plan shall:

- a. identify the questions to be answered through the evaluation
- b. indicate how these questions will be answered
- c. where appropriate, specify persons (staff, family, etc.) who will be involved in carrying out the plan. There should be evidence that these individuals are aware of their role in carrying out this plan.
- d. be periodically reviewed and modified as necessary.

Thus, the review and utilization of complete referral information is seen as being a key to the identification of areas of need and, hence, to the development of an individualized evaluation plan.

In order to prepare an individualized vocational evaluation plan, it is helpful to have available as much pertinent information about the client as possible. In the process of reviewing the referral data, the assessment of the individual's skills, deficits, assets, and limitations begins. This in turn leads to the identification of client needs which will be rephrased as referral questions to be addressed in the evaluation plan. Generally, referral questions are presented by the referring agency. Ideally, during the process of information-gathering and exchange between the referring counselor and the client, questions that need to be answered in order to assist the

client in making a good vocational decision should be developed. The referring counselor can then make a judgement as to the rehabilitation facility or service which can best assist them in gaining the needed information. However, in many cases, the referral questions may be missing or so broad as to diminish their usefulness in planning. It is in such instances where it is necessary for the evaluator to go back to the referral information in order to develop specific questions to be used in planning. For example, a state vocational rehabilitation agency counselor indicates that the reason for referring a particular individual is to find out what jobs the person is best suited for. Although general, this seems like a straightforward reason. However, upon reviewing the referral information, it is found that the individual has held a wide variety of jobs for short periods of time over the past couple of years. This leads to additional questions which should be addressed during evaluation, and may indicate that the client has needs which must be met through further services.

Thus, through careful review of referral information and discussions with the client, the evaluator may come up with many additional questions which must be answered during the client's evaluation. When this situation occurs, the referring counselor and the client must be kept fully informed so that they have a clear understanding of the scope of the client's evaluation. If the referring counselor and the client do not agree with the proposed questions, then obviously agreement by all parties concerned as to the exact scope of the evaluation must be reached before proceeding further.

#### General and Specific Referral Questions

The issue of specific versus general referral questions merits additional consideration before proceeding further. As mentioned previously, the reasons for a referral should be stated by the referral source in terms of specific client needs or questions to be addressed during the evaluation. In order to ask specific referral questions, the referring agent and the client also need to go through an information-gathering process of their own. However, the client may have had limited experiences, and as a result, there simply may not be much information available beyond school records. This situation can be reflected in questions such as: "What kinds of work can Peter do?" or, "Is Samantha employable?" The facility may even be asked simply to provide a vocational evaluation, with no other reasons and requests stated. When this happens, the referral source should be contacted in an attempt to clarify more specifically what is being requested. Still, there are legitimate reasons for requesting a general or exploratory evaluation for a particular individual; it is in such cases that the information-gathering process becomes more complex and assumes even greater importance. Let's say, for example, that a counselor is confronted with an individual who has not previously held any jobs to speak of, and cannot express any areas of interest because he really has no ideas as to what he wants to do. Under such circumstances the counselor may have little choice but to state these facts, and ask the facility to assist the individual in undertaking occupational exploration in order to identify areas of work for which the individual has ability and interest.

In contrast to general referral questions or statements are specific questions which might be stated as follows: Does Jerry have the ability to work as a tool and die maker as he would like? or Does Virgil have the mechanical skills and aptitudes needed to justify training in auto mechanics?

When questions like these are asked, the referring counselor and client have obviously undertaken some initial vocational exploration which has resulted in a need for additional information. The nature of the information-gathering process prior to the beginning of services, therefore, will be structured accordingly in order to meet the needs of the client and the referral source. Thus, information should not be obtained simply for the purpose of completing a bureaucratic form, but rather to serve as a resource in developing an evaluation plan tailored to the needs of the individual.



## Gathering Information

### Information Categories

In order to identify specific client needs leading to the development of an individualized evaluation plan, it is generally helpful to have as much vocationally relevant information about an individual as possible. This raises the issue of what constitutes vocational relevance. Actually, whether or not a piece of information is vocationally relevant will vary between individuals. A person's intense craving for candy may or may not be relevant depending on the person's job goal and medical condition. If the individual wants to work in a candy factory and is prediabetic, then it certainly would be relevant. On the other hand, the fact that a person prefers to be alone is almost always vocationally significant. In spite of the fact that the relevance of certain information varies from one situation to another, client information can be grouped into specific information categories, each of which should be considered in vocational planning to meet individual needs.

Client information which is gathered and analyzed should relate to the individual's ability to find, secure, and retain employment. However, in order to find satisfactory employment, the individual should also have some type of job goal. Thus, vocational interests and goals, both immediate and long-term, represent important considerations. Job retention is also heavily influenced by a wide variety of social/environmental factors such as family expectations and relationships, financial concerns, etc. The following information categories are representative of the major types of information that are generally most useful in vocational planning: (1) Demographic/Identifying Information; (2) Work History; (3) Education and Training; (4) Personal/Social/Environmental Factors; (5) Physical and Mental Capacities; (6) Vocational Interests and Goals; and (7) Job Seeking Experience. The information categories are further described in the following paragraphs.

#### (1) Demographic/Identifying Information

This category is rather self-explanatory in that it includes pertinent identifying information about an individual. The individual should know this information and be readily able to pass it on to perspective employers via employment applications as well as in job interviews. Included in this category are the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_ full name
- \_\_\_\_\_ current address
- \_\_\_\_\_ telephone number
- \_\_\_\_\_ social security number
- \_\_\_\_\_ date of birth (age)
- \_\_\_\_\_ marital status
- \_\_\_\_\_ number of dependents, names, ages, and relationship

\_\_\_\_ name and address of parent/guardian and/or nearest relative  
\_\_\_\_ height and weight  
\_\_\_\_ military status/record

Although there may be other specific pieces of identifying information that will be helpful or desirable in certain situations, those listed are the ones generally most requested in completing employment applications.

Possible questions to be considered:

1. Can the individual repeat important demographic facts from memory?
2. Is the individual able to reproduce this information on employment applications and other forms?
3. Does the person have a social security account number and card?
4. If the individual does not have his or her own telephone, is there a number at which he or she can be reached, and/or messages can be left?
5. Does the person know the name and address of his or her nearest relative or close family friend?

## (2) Work History

For the purposes of evaluation planning, this is perhaps the most important information category. Many persons who enter rehabilitation programs often have little or no previous work experience. When experience in the world of work is limited or nonexistent, the individual's ability to select a realistic vocational goal is sometimes seriously affected since the individual has no personal reference point. This can result in unrealistic choices based on secondhand information obtained from television, movies, and friends. For example, certain jobs or occupations may appear glamorous and exciting as depicted in the media, when in reality they may be quite the opposite or at least not nearly as exciting as portrayed.

Other individuals may have extensive, specific work experience, but have suffered a traumatic injury or disabling condition and are forced to consider new alternatives. Persons having prior work experience are likely to have skills which are transferable; minimally, they at least have realistic knowledge of the world of work due to their prior contact with the work environment.

For those who have sporadic experience consisting of a variety of jobs of short duration, a different set of problems and needs are presented. Some people are fairly successful in obtaining employment, but for one reason or another, do not remain on any particular job very long. A work history indicating frequent job changes suggests that there may be serious work behavior/job retention problems which will have to be addressed through additional services. For example, a person who has a work history as a waiter or waitress may not really enjoy this type of work, but since they do not know what they would rather do, they end up staying in the same line of work, even though changing employers frequently.

An additional point for possible consideration is that all areas of potentially-gained skills should be explored including summer jobs and volunteer work. Work experience or lack of it is important in every case and should be carefully analyzed in order to arrive at a better understanding of individual needs.

Possible questions to be considered:

1. If there is a work history, is the individual able to accurately repeat it from memory?
2. Are there any gaps in the work history which require explanation?
3. Does the person know the name of his or her immediate supervisor on each job held?
4. Can the individual clearly describe his or her job duties and responsibilities?
5. Is the individual able to furnish references?
6. What did the person like most about his or her previous jobs? Least?
7. What equipment, machines, and/or tools can the individual operate or use?
8. What was the most recent work experience?
9. Has the individual ever been discharged from a job? If so, why?
10. When jobs have been changed voluntarily, what has been the primary reason?
11. What would be the most important consideration in looking for any new job--wages, hours, benefits, location, people? Least important?
12. What was the person's last salary or wage?
13. Is the individual aware of any problems that he or she may have had in getting along with co-workers? Supervisors? If so, what is the nature of these problems?
14. How much work has been missed due to absenteeism or lateness as a result of medical or personal problems? If so, how frequently has this occurred?
15. Has the person done any volunteer work which may be vocationally significant?
16. Does the person carry a "union" card or has he or she ever belonged to a union?

### (3) Education and Training

The amount of education and specialized training that a person has had are major factors influencing the variety and levels of jobs which will be available to that individual. Even most entry level jobs stipulate a high school diploma or equivalency degree as a minimum requirement. However, it is important to keep in mind that job requirements as stated by employers will vary according to the labor supply and business climate. When jobs are scarce, high school graduates may find themselves competing for the same jobs as persons having college and graduate degrees. This does not necessarily mean that the person with the advanced degree has an advantage; in fact the opposite may be the case. On the other hand, when the labor supply is limited or scarce, employers will often waive or lower educational requirements in order to obtain workers, except where certain academic or technical skills are essential to the performance of the job.

Although skilled workers are generally in demand in a growing economy, there are occasional situations when even skilled workers in a particular trade may have difficulty in finding employment, as is the case of workers in the building trades when new construction declines.

Although requirements vary according to the labor supply, generally the more educated or skilled person will have an advantage in the job market. One of the primary reasons for this is because academic or other skills can usually be transferred to other job fields, resulting in more latitude in job selection. If an individual's existing educational level or lack of specific skills severely limit the person's ability to find and keep a job, depending on the individual's interests and job goal, additional education and/or training may be justified and needed. In making this decision, specific information as to the person's general educational development must be obtained. Reading level is particularly important if the needed education or training is classroom based. However, caution must be exercised in using reading level as an indicator of a person's ability to participate in or the benefit from additional training. If reading skills are not required in the actual performance of the job, then other ways can and should be used to provide the desired training.

Persons who have limited reading and writing skills will have other needs, however, the most obvious being assistance in completing employment applications and other forms. In addition, the evaluation and assessment techniques selected must be appropriate to the needs of the individual, enabling that person to demonstrate his or her knowledge and abilities without bias. Evaluators should be creative in trying to adapt assessment tools which require reading skills in order to meet the assessment needs of nonreaders or persons who have limited achievement in this area.

Possible questions to be considered:

1. How much formal education has the individual completed?
2. Has the individual completed any specific vocationally-related course work?
3. Has the person received any specific vocational training or preparation outside of his or her formal education?



4. Does the person possess any trade licenses or certificates?
5. Has there been any military service including special training or job duties?
6. If the individual has been in the military, what is the discharge status?
7. What were the individual's best liked courses in school? Least liked?
8. Is the individual's job goal consistent with his or her level of education and/or training?
9. Would additional training result in improved employment potential?
10. Is the person interested in and willing to participate in additional training if needed?
11. Are there training or educational resources available which will meet the individual's needs?
12. Is funding available in order to underwrite the costs of training or education?

#### (4) Personal and Social Adjustment

---

Any work environment is also a complex social setting; therefore, people do not separate their work and nonwork lives, but bring to work with them a wide variety of influences which affect their lives outside of work. Marital, financial, transportation, housing, child care, and related problems can have a substantial effect on an individual's ability to function in the job setting and, hence, retain employment.

Rehabilitation personnel frequently indicate that their clients lose jobs not because of an inability to perform as such, but rather most frequently due to a variety of personal and socially-influenced behaviors which affect their work performance. For example, if a person is having marital difficulties and is confronted with an impending divorce or separation, then that individual is likely to be less productive or miss work frequently as a result of difficulty in dealing with the situation. People who are having financial problems may find their performance similarly affected. The prospect of facing monthly financial obligations which exceed income or potential income can be enough to depress anyone. The individual's level of motivation can be severely impaired as a result. This is very similar to a problem often encountered with individuals receiving public assistance or some type of welfare subsidy. The question of why an individual should go to work at a menial job for less or even slightly more money than is received for not working is often asked, but seldom satisfactorily answered by social engineers. This is a factor which likewise must be considered in rehabilitation planning for many disabled persons.

Family involvement and support is another very important factor for consideration in rehabilitation programming. If an individual's immediate family is not supportive of the rehabilitation program, then that person's motivation



or degree of participation is likely to be adversely affected. Often husbands or wives, parents, and sometimes even children may be misguided by financial considerations and/or dependency needs, which in turn cause them to discourage their disabled spouse, parent, or child from participating. This can particularly be a problem when the individual is dependent on the parent or spouse for transportation and/or partial financial support. If participation of the individual in the rehabilitation program is contingent on the cooperation of family members, then it is extremely important to identify these needs for inclusion in the rehabilitation or evaluation plan.

Transportation or the lack of it is almost always an important consideration in identifying client needs. If an individual has an automobile or is able to use public transportation, this will certainly be an employability asset. However, when the person does not drive, public transportation is unavailable, or the individual is unable to use it, then this presents another set of needs which will have to be addressed. Along with the availability of transportation, the costs involved should also be considered; transportation costs for severely disabled persons can be particularly significant. For example, a person in a wheelchair is likely to have special needs resulting in transportation costs exceeding those of persons not having a disability of the lower extremities. Hence, a larger portion of income goes towards meeting these additional costs.

Housing or a person's living arrangement may also have an impact on an individual's ability to hold a job. The cost of housing is almost always an important factor, as is proximity to work, transportation, shopping, medical services, and recreational outlets. For persons in wheelchairs, the house or apartment must also be accessible. In many cases, it can be difficult to find accessible housing which has other desirable features such as proximity to work or transportation.

A person's social adjustment is frequently reflected in their leisure time activities. If relocation is a fact or possibility, job retention or participation in rehabilitation programming can be affected by the individual's adjustment to the community or new surroundings. Feelings of isolation, real or imagined, can lead to a desire to return to more familiar surroundings where services and employment may be more difficult to obtain. If the person has previously participated in group recreational activities as is often the case in state institutions, activity centers, and in smaller communities, the availability of similar, substitute activities should be identified. Hobbies and leisure-time activities should be closely scrutinized for potential interests and skills which might be relevant to job selection and employability.

For persons who have preschool children the need for child care assistance often presents a substantial barrier to employment. It is difficult for most parents to be enthusiastic about work or rehabilitation programming when they have misgivings about the care of their children. The availability of a reliable babysitter or child care center is a need that must be addressed in planning for disabled parents. If this need is not addressed satisfactorily, then rehabilitation programming or employment can be delayed or severely disrupted.

Finally, an individual's ability to care for his or her own daily needs is a very important factor in getting along successfully both at and outside of work. One area having substantial employment and social implications is that

of grooming and personal hygiene. Although this is somewhat of a subjective area, there are certain basic grooming and hygiene requirements for almost every job. Of course, depending on the exact nature of the employment setting such as in food service or health care, the requirements permit a lesser degree of personal flexibility. Even in so-called dirty jobs, certain minimum standards need to be maintained in order for the individual to be accepted by and get along reasonably well with co-workers. Individual needs in this area will be somewhat dependent on the person's job goal, and should be assessed over a period of time rather than on the basis of a single or limited sample of behavior.

Possible questions to be considered:

1. What is the individual's marital status?
2. Are family members (spouse, parents, children) supportive of the individual's rehabilitation plans?
3. Are there any children or other persons dependent on the individual for financial support or other care?
4. What are the ages of dependent children?
5. Are child care needs being met adequately?
6. Are there any special child care considerations, i.e., handicapped child?
7. What is (are) the individual's source(s) of income?
8. How much income is needed in order to meet current debts and financial obligations?
9. Is financial help being received from public assistance, social security, workmen's compensation, or any other sources?
10. Have wages ever been garnished?
11. Are there any legal judgments currently in effect or pending?
12. Has the individual ever been convicted of a felony? Has this resulted in time spent in a correctional facility?
13. What is the person's living arrangement--own home, renting house or apartment, boarding home or group residence, living with parents or other family members, or living independently?
14. Is the individual able to provide his or her own transportation or use public transportation if available?
15. Is the person's residence convenient to public transportation, shopping, medical services, recreational outlets, etc.?
16. Does the individual have any housing needs which are currently unmet or in need of improvement, i.e., accessibility?

17. Does the person belong to any social clubs or organizations, or regularly take part in organized social or church activities?
18. Are any hobbies engaged in on a regular basis? Do hobbies or other leisure time pursuits have vocational significance?
19. Is the person's grooming and hygiene appropriate to his or her expressed job goal, as well as acceptable to others in social situations?
20. Have there been any obvious problems in getting along satisfactorily in the home or in the community?

#### (5) Disability (Physical and Mental Capacities)

Individual needs in this area are sometimes initially difficult to determine in view of the fact that referral information is often outdated or has little relevance to a person's ability to function in a work or social situation. Although assumptions are often made on the basis of medical and psychological information, and the physical appearance and behavior of the individual, these assumptions can often be misleading and should always be validated through additional assessment and/or observation. Failure to do so can result in stereotyping which affects the subsequent delivery of services as well as service outcomes. For example, although a number of persons may have the same diagnosed disability of epilepsy, the manner in which each individual adjusts to that disability is unique. Therefore, medical and other referral data may be accurate, but lacking in insights as to the individual's performance, behavior, and needs.

It is important to determine how the person perceives his or her disability and its impact on the ability to work. It is not necessary to have a medically-detailed understanding of the nature of the impairments, but rather the individual should be realistically aware of the limitations on his or her ability to function. For example, the fact that a person knows he has difficulty in reading is much more vocationally relevant than is knowing that he has a complicated learning disability which he cannot explain.

An individual's perception of himself as a worker is also extremely important in vocational planning. Some traumatically-disabled persons may not see themselves as being able to do much of anything, let alone as being "workers"; still others may have unrealistically high expectations in view of the true nature of their abilities. People who have had a history of failure experiences also may not see themselves as being capable of doing much. One reason why this subject is so important is because the way in which the individual perceives himself will most likely be reflected in the way that individual is perceived by others. This has some serious implications for future dealings with employers as well as for the individual's overall personal and social adjustment. It is important, however, to keep in mind that a person's perception of disability and functional skills should always be interpreted in relation to vocational goals and interests. If a discrepancy exists between the individual's vocational goal and demonstrated functional ability, then this represents a major area of potential conflict which must be resolved.

Limitations in mobility or other restrictions which may affect the selection and location of services or employment should be noted. Requirements for special equipment and/or modifications in work station design will have major implications for job placement as well as for other services. It is also important to be aware of any prescription medications that are being taken as well as of any potential side effects which may exist. Although the individual may be aware of the possibility of side effects, he or she may not be aware of the manner in which his or her work performance can be altered as a result. For example, certain medications may result in a dryness or thirst causing the individual to leave the work station frequently. Unless the individual and evaluator are aware that this is a side effect of medication, it may be regarded as a work behavior in need of change.

Impairments in vision and hearing are frequently encountered as secondary disabilities. Limitations in these key sensory areas have a wide range of implications both for assessment and eventual placement. This also applies to individuals who have epileptic seizures where the degree of control, medication side effects, and potentially hazardous situations are all important considerations. The problems encountered by persons having perceptual and other learning disabilities can be complicated and varied. This often presents a substantial challenge to evaluation personnel by way of identifying techniques which will enable the individual to learn and, hence, perform.

Possible questions to be considered:

1. Is the individual able to describe his or her disability in practical terms in light of its effects on functional skills and abilities?
2. Are these perceptions consistent with medical records and observed behavior and performance?
3. Are there special medical needs and/or disability factors which must be taken into consideration in evaluation planning or job placement, i.e., aids or appliances?
4. Does the individual appear to have a realistic perception of his or her disability?
5. Is this perception consistent with the individual's expressed vocational goal?
6. Is the person taking prescription medication? Are there any apparent or potential side effects?
7. Is the person currently receiving ongoing medical or psychological care? Does this care have any short or long-term implications for assessment or job placement services?
8. What plans have been made or what resources are available in order to assist the individual in meeting continuing or newly identified medical or psychological needs?
9. Is the individual's physical stamina consistent with the individual's expressed vocational goal?



## (6) Vocational Interests and Goals

Many persons begin vocational evaluation or other rehabilitation services without having a specific vocational goal or objective in mind. This may be particularly true for those who have had limited education, training, or work experience. There are others, on the other hand, who will be quite explicit in stating their interests and preferred job goals. The individual who has an extremely unrealistic job goal in view of their education and/or experience can often be more difficult to work with than the person who has no goal at all. In any event, clarifying vocational goals and interests is a primary function of the vocational evaluation process since selection of a job goal is a first step towards employment.

Vocational needs and preferences not only relate to selecting a job goal, but can also have an effect on eventual job retention. Once again, the individual who has not had prior work experience may have unrealistic expectations as to what certain jobs are actually like. In contrast, the experienced worker is likely to have a clearer idea of the things that are most important to him or her in selecting a job. For many, the primary consideration will be where they can earn the highest wage and have a majority of their other needs met at the same time.

The individual should always be given as many opportunities as possible to verify his or her vocational choice. Of course, there are a variety of methods and techniques for doing this ranging from vocational tests to an on-the-job tryout at the actual job itself. For the individual whose choice is unrealistic or not substantiated through evaluation, then as many other alternatives as possible should be identified. The evaluation should be supplemented by occupational information in order to assist the individual in learning as much about potential jobs as possible. Care must be used in selecting occupational information which is appropriate to the individual's educational or reading level. Such information can usually be adapted in order to do this.

Possible questions to be considered:

1. Does the individual have an expressed job goal?
2. Does the goal appear to be realistic in relation to previous experience, educational level, disability, etc.?
3. Are expressed interests and goals supported by tests, observation, and performance?
4. What, if any, would be the individual's "ideal" job choice?
5. If the person does not have a job goal, are there additional interests which may be helpful to the individual in choosing one?
6. Is the individual in need of additional information about jobs in order to verify his or her vocational choice?
7. Is the individual's perception of his or her job choice realistic in terms of understanding the nature of the work, working conditions, wages, etc.?



8. Is additional education or training needed or desirable in order to reach the job goal or to assist the individual in becoming more employable?

9. If the individual's primary job goal is not available or is inappropriate for one reason or another, what alternatives are available? What techniques should be used to redirect the individual in job goal selection?

#### (7) Job-Seeking Experience

Specific information regarding a person's experience and success in seeking and obtaining employment can point out important strengths and/or limitations for consideration in the evaluation planning process. Since employment is generally the desired outcome from vocational rehabilitation services, deficits in this area can be critical and, hence, an area of emphasis in service planning.

The individual who has had some prior success in obtaining employment will most likely have knowledge and skills which are transferable to new situations. However, job-seeking experience should nevertheless be closely analyzed in each case. For example, although a person may have been able to obtain work, the jobs that the individual has held may have been either too demanding or unrewarding. Thus, although the individual has been able to obtain work, inappropriate job choices eventually resulted in losing the job either through resignation or dismissal.

The individual who has not been able to obtain employment will have a different set of needs. If a person has actually looked for work extensively without being hired, then that person's approach to looking for a job will have to be closely scrutinized in order to determine the individual's needs. For example, an individual's approach to job-seeking may be so haphazard that the possibility for success is minimal. For the person who has not been involved in seeking employment before, an entirely new set of skills and behaviors will have to be developed.

Possible questions to be considered:

1. Has the individual had prior experience in looking for work? What degree of success has he or she experienced?
2. What resources have been used to obtain leads about job openings?
3. Does the individual know how to use the public employment services, the want ads, and friends as resources in obtaining job leads?
4. Is the person capable of completing application forms independently?
5. Does the individual know appropriate interview behaviors? Should this be verified through mock interviews and role playing?
6. Is the individual capable of expressing him/herself moderately well in an interview situation?
7. Is appropriate clothing and grooming for job interviewing a problem?

8. Is transportation available for getting to and from job interviews?
  9. Does the person know how to respond to difficult questions which might come up during the interview?
  10. Is he or she capable of recalling important work history or other personal information when asked?
  11. When was the individual's most recent job seeking attempt?
  12. When looking for work, how many contacts has the person made on the average per day or week?
  13. Would the individual's job seeking skills be improved through additional training?
-

## Client Understanding and Involvement in the Evaluation Process

Although client involvement and understanding is not an information category as such, it is an important factor in determining the direction and scope of an individual's evaluation program. A person's understanding of why he or she has been referred, as well as what can be expected from the evaluation, is extremely important if, not critical to the effectiveness of the evaluation. The individual's degree of knowledge and understanding should be clarified as one of the first priorities during the initial interview. What has the individual been told about the facility and the evaluation program by the referring counselor? What does he or she hope to gain as a result of his or her participation? It is extremely important that the individual understand the reasons why the information generated through vocational evaluation is needed . . . to assist the individual and the referral source in making sound vocational decisions. In order to fully participate in the evaluation program, the individual should have a basic understanding of the purposes of the evaluation as well as how the process can be of benefit. It is essential that the individual's expectations be in substantial agreement with what the facility can provide. If there are misconceptions resulting from incomplete or inaccurate information from the referring counselor, these misconceptions should be addressed before proceeding further. Since misunderstandings on the client's part can have a major impact on the individual's motivation and hence, participation, it is extremely important there be mutual agreement on the purpose and goals of the evaluation program. The client must understand that his or her role in planning and decision-making is crucial to the delivery of an effective vocational evaluation. However, the client can exercise this role only when he or she has been fully informed.

---

### The Initial Interview

The initial or diagnostic interview, as it is sometimes referred to, is an important part of the information-gathering process. As the term implies, the initial interview is one of the first steps in the development of a working relationship between the client and the evaluation unit staff. The effectiveness of this relationship is at least partially determined as a result of the information exchanged and rapport established during the interview itself. Basically, it can be stated that the initial interview has two major purposes, the first being the exchange of information which leads to the development of an individualized evaluation plan. The second major purpose is establishing the rapport needed to develop an effective working relationship between the client and his or her evaluator.

There are a number of other secondary purposes for conducting an initial interview. The following have been edited from "Vocational Diagnostic Interviewing," by Sturm, Otto, and Bakeman:

1. The interview provides the opportunity to gather information that can't be obtained from a form.
2. Information obtained from other sources, such as application forms and referral information, can be confirmed or clarified, and gaps in information filled.

3. Persons unable to complete forms or explain their situation adequately in writing may be able to furnish more detailed, accurate information in a one-to-one interview.
4. The interview provides the opportunity for observing the individual's nonverbal behavior including attitudes, values, and enthusiasm.
5. The client is provided the opportunity to ask open-ended questions and engage in spontaneous exchange.

Returning to the major purposes of information exchange and establishment of rapport, these activities are not in conflict as they can be carried on simultaneously. Rapport is not easily established with all people, especially during or as a result of a single interview. It may take several contacts before each party feels comfortable with the relationship. The skilled interviewer will be highly conscious of the extent to which an effective relationship is being developed. Rapport is also a matter of degree, and it will be greater between some individuals than others. The only instance in which rapport should be an ongoing issue is when it is totally lacking or when the absence of the same interferes with an individual's evaluation program.

It is important to keep in mind that the initial interview is a two-way process. It should not be structured solely to gather facts about the client for use by the evaluation staff, but should also provide the client with the opportunity to give and request information that is important to the individual. If the client feels that he or she is simply being put through an administrative exercise, then much of the purpose of the initial interview is lost. A major purpose of the initial interview is to exchange information that will help identify client needs, and not to meet the bureaucratic needs of the facility. ~~As a result of identifying client needs, the information needs of the facility should also be met.~~

Because the amount of time for conducting the interview is limited, it is important to use this time as efficiently as possible. However, a balance should be maintained between efficient time usage and thoroughness. If the speed in which the interview is conducted becomes a major objective in and of itself, the client is likely to get the impression that he or she is simply being rushed through the process. In addition, it is also possible that the information obtained will be incomplete or inaccurate. The pace of the interview may also be taken by the client as an indication of the interviewer's attitude towards the information exchange process. This can produce negative connotations for the client, and may be particularly disruptive if the person conducting the interview is going to be involved further in the individual's evaluation program. It is essential that all parties see the importance of the initial interview in its proper perspective, viewing it as a beginning in the development of an effective, individualized evaluation plan based on a team approach. The client's role in planning and implementing his or her own program should be emphasized.

A key to the effectiveness of the initial interview is structure or being organized. If the interview is conducted in a haphazard fashion without prior planning, the results are likely to reflect the same. The major purpose for conducting the interview should be kept in mind; that is, to exchange vocationally-relevant information which provides a basis for joint development of an individualized evaluation plan. The terms "joint" and "individualized" also



indicate that a major function of the interview is to initiate the development of an effective working relationship with the client.

The amount of information covered during the interview will depend on the nature of the information already available in some other form as well as on the goals and objectives of the evaluation itself. In many instances, a major activity of the interview will be to clarify, confirm or supplement the information provided by the referral source. A problem occurs when important information is missing or not presented in a usable format. In addition, some types of needed information do not lend themselves to secondhand reporting on forms. Topics of information which are obvious to both parties or immaterial to the vocational planning process should not be priority items during the interview.

In order to determine the scope and direction of the interview, the interviewer must know what specific information is needed as well as what is already available. This is essential for setting priorities for the interview itself. Adequate prior planning helps to ensure that the information needs of client and the evaluation staff are met through the initial interview.

#### Development and Use of A Structured Information Form

Many rehabilitation facility personnel would hastily protest that the last thing they need is another form. For anyone involved in excessive paperwork including completing forms, this protest has a great deal of merit. For many, additional paperwork is excessive to the extent that it takes away from the amount of time available for direct client services. In view of caseload sizes in many facilities, this viewpoint is realistic.

Forms in and of themselves have no justification unless they serve a useful purpose. In some instances, a form is developed for a single situation-specific purpose without much thought given as to how this same form might meet other needs. It is possible for a single, well designed form to take the place of and provide more useful information than that furnished by several existing forms. For example, as a result of forethought and careful planning, a single form could be developed to effectively replace application blanks, fact sheets, and other departmental and program specific forms. All agency forms should be critically evaluated as to their usefulness before a new form is added.

Just what is a structured information form? For our purposes, it is a tool which helps facility personnel to gather and record in usable fashion all important vocational information about an individual. In addition, the structured information form provides an aide for guiding the information-exchange process between the client and the facility staff which takes place during the initial vocational interview. Although the information form is not a planning form as such, it can function as a valuable planning aid since all important vocational information is readily retrievable for use in planning. As a tool for structuring the initial interview, a well designed information form offers a number of advantages:

1. When completed by a referring counselor and client together, the form directs the attention of both parties to the information needed by the facility for vocational planning. By completing the form



together, the counselor and client, in a sense, have a "pre-orientation" to the facility and have also initiated the teamwork approach. As a result, both parties are likely to have a commitment to the individual's vocational evaluation program. Since the referring counselor is responsible for providing referral information to the facility, the form helps the counselor to provide that information which is most useful. Because a well-designed form lets the referring counselor know what information is expected by the facility, use of the form may also lead to the additional benefit of improved referral decisions and questions by referring agencies.

2. Once completed, the form directs the attention of the facility staff to missing information. Because the form has been designed for recording information in a usable format, the staff can readily determine additional information which needs to be obtained, either from the client during the interview, from the referral source, or from the evaluation process itself. Information need priorities can then be established.
3. The form helps to identify information needing further clarification. In many instances, responses or non-responses to form items may lead to additional questions on the part of the interviewer. For example, an individual might indicate that he or she does woodworking as a hobby. The interviewer may then want to determine with the individual whether or not this interest has any vocational significance. Another example of a non-response or an unexplained response which usually requires clarification is that of an arrest record or criminal conviction. If an individual skips the item or responds affirmatively without explanation, it may indicate that he or she is reluctant to discuss a prior arrest or has difficulty explaining the situation. Since employment interviewers are often experienced at "red flagging" such items, the individual may need help in learning how to explain the problem in an acceptable manner. Perhaps the most common area needing clarification during the initial interview is that of work history. Although facility personnel are usually familiar with the local labor market, because of its importance for vocational planning, it is essential to know as much detail about the individual's work history as possible. By reviewing the person's work history, the interviewer can gain valuable insights about an individual's vocational strengths as well as needs.
4. There are a number of advantages in having the client complete as much of the form on his or her own as possible. Many times assumptions are made about an individual's ability without providing that individual with an opportunity to demonstrate what his or her ability actually is. Providing the person with the opportunity to complete the form demonstrates respect for the person as an individual. Even for the person who is able to print only basic demographic information such as name and address, the opportunity to do so is still important. It stands to reason that certain precautions should be taken in using a self-administered form with persons having limited reading and writing skills. There is not much to be gained from submitting someone to the frustration resulting from an hour of staring at a blank form. With persons obviously having limited basic academic skills, the interviewer should remain close by to observe, or should check back in five

or ten minutes to see if the individual needs assistance. If the individual appears to be having difficulty completing the form, the interviewer should simply ask if some assistance is needed. The form can then be completed by the interviewer and the client together.

In addition to an appraisal of basic reading and writing skills, a client-completed form also provides insights about the individual's ability to fill out employment application forms. This may lead to the identification of additional needs for assistance. Because academic skills can also be determined in other ways, the main advantages of a client-completed information form are: (1) it saves time by having the individual complete the form before the interview; (2) it acknowledges the client as being a capable individual and encourages his or her involvement in the evaluation process.

5. Many individuals by themselves are likely to have some difficulty completing all sections of even the most well-designed form. As a result, a team approach, with the interviewer assisting the individual is perhaps the most common method used for completing such forms. Although time-consuming, this approach gives the interviewer a perspective of the individual's retention, recall, and ability to communicate personal and vocational information. This can lead to the identification of additional information needs.

Because information exchange and recording are beneficial, but time-consuming procedures, facilities should explore alternatives in order to make the best use of their available personnel. Few agencies are so fortunate as to be able to afford a "full-time" intake person. For those that are, then this person would probably be in the best position to assist clients in completing the information form. Another viable alternative is to consider using a clerical person in this capacity. This would necessitate training the individual in using the form. A third and perhaps the most realistic option is group administration of the form where one staff person assists several individuals in completing the form at the same time. The number of persons in the group who could be adequately assisted in this way would have to be determined through experience.

In all of the above approaches, once the person who assists the clients in completing the form gains experience, they could possibly become proficient at identifying information items needing additional clarification in the initial interview itself. In other words, the person who assists the individual in completing the form may develop insights about the client or receive information not on the form that will be helpful in gaining a better understanding of the client. This information must then be shared with other persons responsible for further planning with the client.

6. One of the primary advantages stemming from development and use of a structured information form is that all important vocational information is available on one convenient record, eliminating the need for many other forms. When the form is properly used, the reader can readily determine which information is missing or in need of clarification. This is very helpful for structuring the initial interview.

A well-designed form assists the facility staff in identifying potential employment assets, limitation, and needs. Once again, this is possible because the form has been designed as a tool for use in obtaining this information.

### The MDC Structured Information Form

The MDC form was developed to correspond with the seven information categories previously described in this publication. The seven sections of the form include: (1) Demographic/Identifying Information; (2) Work History; (3) Education/Training; (4) Personal/Social Adjustment; (5) Medical/Physical; (6) Vocational Interests/Goals; and (7) Job-Seeking Experience. In addition to the seven primary sections, two optional sections have been added which are labeled "Client Involvement" and "Referral Information Summary." These extra sections have been developed so that all significant information could be included on a single, comprehensive form. Some facilities may prefer to handle this documentation in other ways than to include it on a comprehensive form. Experience in gathering information through use of the form will no doubt result in modifications which are most efficient and helpful to individual facilities.

That the MDC form is lengthy is obvious. This will undoubtedly cause some individuals to be rather skeptical about its usefulness. In evaluating the utility of this or similar forms, it is important to keep a couple of considerations in mind. First, a single, well-designed, comprehensive form can replace several specific or single purpose forms. Thus, a comprehensive form can result in a reduction in the number of forms needed in individual case files. In addition, it makes the task of information retrieval much simpler and streamlined since most significant background information about an individual can be found in one place.

Second, and most important, a well-designed form serves as a tool for structuring the information-gathering process, thus insuring that important information about an individual is available for use in the planning process. Although completion of the form may seem somewhat time-consuming, this initial time expenditure is counterbalanced by the savings in time later spent in service planning. Essentially, information-gathering and evaluation and other services planning are parts of the same process. However, because of the importance of information to the planning process, this publication focuses primarily on this particular phase of the process. Additional information regarding the specifics of evaluation planning can be found in the MDC publication "The Individual Evaluation Plan," by Paul McCray, 1978.

### How to Use the MDC Form

As previously mentioned, the MDC Structured Information Form is divided into seven sections or information categories commonly used in client planning. Although certain items could logically be assigned to more than one section, this has been avoided in order to prevent item duplication.

In addition, in spite of the already large number of items, the MDC form could be even longer if an attempt was made to be all-inclusive. For example, Section 4, Personal/Social Adjustment, could be expanded to include a much



broader range of items on personal and family history. However, in an effort to keep the form to a manageable size, it was decided to focus on those items most relevant to an individual's current level of functioning. One of the advantages of any form is that it can be shortened or expanded to meet individual and facility needs. Many of the items in the Work History and/or Job-Seeking Experience sections, for example, are not extremely relevant for someone who has had limited experience in these areas. However, this information itself or the lack of it tells you something important about the individual. In any event, the MDC encourages facilities to revise or redesign any MDC format or procedure in order to best meet its own specific needs.

Individual items within the seven primary and two optional sections of the form are alphabetically lettered for easy reference. This should help in identifying those items where information is missing or additional clarification is needed. Each section of the form is followed by a space labeled "Information Needs" where such items can be identified along with a brief comment or question regarding the specific nature of the information need. For example, in Section (5), Medical/Physical, an individual indicates that medication is being taken, but the name of the drug and the reasons why it has been prescribed are unclear. This could appear in the Information Needs space as follows:

#### Information Needs

##### Item #5d - Question or Comment

Client does not know name of drug, dosage, or why it is being taken.

Since the use of a prescription medication could prove to be a potential health and safety hazard for the individual, this represents an information need which should be clarified as soon as possible.

Let's look at another example. Getting along with supervisor's and co-workers is a key ingredient to success on just about any job where other people are involved. A client indicates on Item 2n that she had problems getting along with the people on her job in a nursing home, but is not really able to provide any insights into the possible reasons for this difficulty. This could appear in the Information Needs space following Section 2 of the form as follows:

#### Information Needs

##### Item #2n - Question or Comment

What specific problems did Thelma have in getting along with people in her former jobs?

Of course, identifying an information need or question is just the initial phase of the planning process. It must be followed by the development of referral or evaluation questions and the identification of specific techniques, methods, or resources for meeting the need or question. This will be discussed further in the section which addresses using identified information needs to develop referral or evaluation questions, page 48. However it should be apparent, thus far, that the use of a structured form can ease the process of

identifying information needs, thereby making the planning process itself more effective and efficient.

#### Who Should Complete the Form?

As described earlier in this manuscript, there are a number of options available for completing a structured information form. Ideally and practically speaking, the form could replace facility referral forms and be completed by the referring counselor and the client together. This would not only assist referring counselors in providing the information which the facility needs, but would also help insure that appropriate referrals are made. In addition, the use of the form by referring counselors should save facility personnel substantial amounts of time. Although it is a referring counselor's responsibility to provide the facility with complete referral information, many counselors may be reluctant to use a lengthy form. Thus, in introducing such a form, a facility may have to make a substantial effort at educating its referral sources as to reasons and advantages behind the form's development. Hopefully, once the form is used, the advantages stemming from its use should be apparent in terms of improved planning and delivery of client services. Improved client programming, therefore, should provide referral sources with an incentive to provide the information requested by the facility.

In lieu of referring counselor participation, certain higher functioning clients can complete the form by themselves without assistance. Although the exact reading level required to accomplish this has not been specifically determined, from the vocabulary used, it is likely that at least a sixth grade reading vocabulary and comprehension level would be the minimum recommended. Some individuals may be able to complete certain items, and have difficulty with others. For those persons completing the form on their own, their performance should be closely monitored to insure that the task is not overly frustrating or time-consuming. Self-completion of the form by individuals who are able may help them to recall certain facts or information which has been previously forgotten. This can be helpful during the review of the form with facility personnel during the initial interview.

A remaining option which is most feasible for a majority of clients is to have a staff member assist the individual in completing the form. This approach helps to insure that individual items are thoroughly understood, thereby maximizing the amount of information that can be solicited from the client directly. Although this approach is undoubtedly time-consuming initially, it can still result in a savings in time later spent in interviewing the individual as well as in the subsequent planning of services. The form can also be used as an "initial interview" form. However, there could be some drawbacks if the form is completed during the initial interview itself. For example, if the interviewer is not careful, he could become preoccupied with writing on the form, and not on paying attention to listening to what the client is actually saying. Thus, many important facts and insights could be overlooked, at least temporarily. Another potential problem with using the form during the interview is in the length of the interview itself. Because it will take additional time to complete the form during an interview situation, the client can become disinterested or bored, and as a result, the quality of the information gained is also likely to suffer.



Perhaps the most viable alternative is to keep the activities of form completion and the initial interview separate. The form, however, regardless of who completes it, can be used to structure the interview by reviewing the completed form with the client. This can assist the interviewer and client to focus in on previously-identified areas in need of clarification or additional information.

MDC Structured Information Form

(1) Demographic/Identifying Information

a. Name (Last, first, middle initial) \_\_\_\_\_

b. Social Security Number \_\_\_\_\_

c. Address \_\_\_\_\_

Street or P.O. Box \_\_\_\_\_

City and State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

d. Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

e. Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

f. Age (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
Month / Day / Year

g. Marital Status (Circle)

Single

Married

Widowed

Divorced

Separated

h. Dependents (People for whom you provided some financial support)

Name	Relationship	Age
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

i. Name of parent, husband or wife, or close friend or relative (in case of emergency)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address or P.O. Box \_\_\_\_\_

City or Town \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

j. Have you ever been in the military?        Yes        No

Branch (Circle) Army Navy Air Force Marines Coast Guard

From (Entry) \_\_\_\_\_ To (Discharge) \_\_\_\_\_  
Month/Year Month/Year

Month/Year

Month/Year

Type of Discharge \_\_\_\_\_ Rank \_\_\_\_\_

Do not write below this line, go on to Part 2, Work History

## Information Needs

Item #	Question or Comment:
1	1. What is the purpose of the study?
2	2. What are the research objectives?
3	3. What is the significance of the study?
4	4. What are the limitations of the study?
5	5. What are the conclusions of the study?
6	6. What are the implications of the study?
7	7. What are the recommendations of the study?
8	8. What are the future research directions?
9	9. What are the ethical considerations?
10	10. What are the acknowledgments?
11	11. What are the references?
12	12. What are the appendices?
13	13. What are the footnotes?
14	14. What are the glossary terms?
15	15. What are the abbreviations?
16	16. What are the symbols?
17	17. What are the units?
18	18. What are the variables?
19	19. What are the hypotheses?
20	20. What are the results?
21	21. What are the discussions?
22	22. What are the conclusions?
23	23. What are the implications?
24	24. What are the recommendations?
25	25. What are the future research directions?
26	26. What are the ethical considerations?
27	27. What are the acknowledgments?
28	28. What are the references?
29	29. What are the appendices?
30	30. What are the footnotes?
31	31. What are the glossary terms?
32	32. What are the abbreviations?
33	33. What are the symbols?
34	34. What are the units?
35	35. What are the variables?
36	36. What are the hypotheses?
37	37. What are the results?
38	38. What are the discussions?
39	39. What are the conclusions?
40	40. What are the implications?
41	41. What are the recommendations?
42	42. What are the future research directions?
43	43. What are the ethical considerations?
44	44. What are the acknowledgments?
45	45. What are the references?
46	46. What are the appendices?
47	47. What are the footnotes?
48	48. What are the glossary terms?
49	49. What are the abbreviations?
50	50. What are the symbols?
51	51. What are the units?
52	52. What are the variables?
53	53. What are the hypotheses?
54	54. What are the results?
55	55. What are the discussions?
56	56. What are the conclusions?
57	57. What are the implications?
58	58. What are the recommendations?
59	59. What are the future research directions?
60	60. What are the ethical considerations?
61	61. What are the acknowledgments?
62	62. What are the references?
63	63. What are the appendices?
64	64. What are the footnotes?
65	65. What are the glossary terms?
66	66. What are the abbreviations?
67	67. What are the symbols?
68	68. What are the units?
69	69. What are the variables?
70	70. What are the hypotheses?
71	71. What are the results?
72	72. What are the discussions?
73	73. What are the conclusions?
74	74. What are the implications?
75	75. What are the recommendations?
76	76. What are the future research directions?
77	77. What are the ethical considerations?
78	78. What are the acknowledgments?
79	79. What are the references?
80	80. What are the appendices?
81	81. What are the footnotes?
82	82. What are the glossary terms?
83	83. What are the abbreviations?
84	84. What are the symbols?
85	85. What are the units?
86	86. What are the variables?
87	87. What are the hypotheses?
88	88. What are the results?
89	89. What are the discussions?
90	90. What are the conclusions?
91	91. What are the implications?
92	92. What are the recommendations?
93	93. What are the future research directions?
94	94. What are the ethical considerations?
95	95. What are the acknowledgments?
96	96. What are the references?
97	97. What are the appendices?
98	98. What are the footnotes?
99	99. What are the glossary terms?
100	100. What are the abbreviations?

*[The page contains faint horizontal lines and scattered dark specks, suggesting it is a blank or heavily degraded document.]*

## (2) Work History

Please list the employers for whom you have worked starting with the most recent. Use the space below. (If you require additional space ask for another copy of this page.)

EMPL. # NAME OF EMPLOYER AND/OR COMPANY ADDRESS AND PHONE

1 \_\_\_\_\_

JOB TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

Work Performed  
(What did you do?) \_\_\_\_\_

What equipment do you operate? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Location (city) \_\_\_\_\_ Mo. Yr. Mo. Yr.

\_\_\_\_\_ Dates worked \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Final salary \_\_\_\_\_/wk.

Reason for Leaving \_\_\_\_\_

-----

EMPL. # NAME OF EMPLOYER AND/OR COMPANY ADDRESS AND PHONE

b: 2 \_\_\_\_\_

JOB TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

Work Performed  
(What did you do?) \_\_\_\_\_

What equipment do you operate? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Location (city) \_\_\_\_\_ Mo. Yr. Mo. Yr.

\_\_\_\_\_ Dates worked \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Final salary \_\_\_\_\_/wk.

Reason for Leaving \_\_\_\_\_



c. EMPL. # NAME OF EMPLOYER AND/OR COMPANY ADDRESS AND PHONE  
3

JOB TITLE

Work Performed  
(What did you do?)

What equipment do you operate?

Location (city) Mo. Yr. Mo. Yr.

Dates worked / to /

Final salary /wk.

Reason for Leaving

d. EMPL. # NAME OF EMPLOYER AND/OR COMPANY ADDRESS AND PHONE  
4

JOB TITLE

Work Performed  
(What did you do?)

What equipment do you operate?

Location (city) Mo. Yr. Mo. Yr.

Dates worked / to /

Final salary /wk.

Reason for Leaving

e. EMPL. # NAME OF EMPLOYER AND/OR COMPANY ADDRESS AND PHONE  
5  
JOB TITLE  
Work Performed  
(What did you do?)  
What equipment do you operate?  
Location (city) Mo. Yr. Mo. Yr.  
Dates worked / to /  
Final salary /wk.  
Reason for Leaving

f. EMPL. # NAME OF EMPLOYER AND/OR COMPANY ADDRESS AND PHONE  
6  
JOB TITLE  
Work Performed  
(What did you do?)  
What equipment do you operate?  
Location (city) Mo. Yr. Mo. Yr.  
Dates worked / to /  
Final salary /wk.  
Reason for Leaving

g. What did you like most about your previous jobs?

h. What did you like least (didn't like) about your previous jobs?

i. Please list any hobbies you have.

j. Please list other activities you do or have done that may be related to work. Include volunteer or other work you haven't mentioned elsewhere.

k. Please list unions or professional associations to which you belong.

l. How often did you miss work due to illness, personal reasons, etc.? (check one)

- ☐ once or twice a week
- ☐ once or twice a month
- ☐ three or four times a year

m. If you missed or were late for work more than once or twice a month, the main reason was because of: (more than one can be checked)

- ☐ lacked transportation
  - ☐ baby sitter/child care problems
  - ☐ did not like work hours
  - ☐ did not like job duties or working conditions
  - ☐ pay was too low
  - ☐ did not get along with co-workers
  - ☐ did not get along with boss/supervisor
  - ☐ sickness/health problem
  - ☐ other (please explain) \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

- n. Did you have any problems getting along with bosses, supervisors, or people who worked with you?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No (If yes, please explain)

- o. Have you ever filed for or received disability insurance or worker's compensation payments for a job-related accident or injury?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No (If yes, please explain)

- p. List three persons who you can use as a work reference.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

-----  
Do not write below this line, go on to Part 3, Education/Training

Information Needs

Item #      Question or Comment:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



**(3) Education/Training**

a. Please list all schools you have attended in the spaces provided.

Grade School: Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Graduated: No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

High School: Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Graduated: No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Vocational/Technical: Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Graduated: No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

College: Name of School \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Graduated: No \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Which classes/subjects in school did you like most?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. Which classes/subjects in school did you like least?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

d. Did you receive any other vocational or special job-related training in school, the military, or from an employer?

☐ Yes ☐ No (If yes, please describe)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

e. Do you have any special trade licenses or certificates?

☐ Yes ☐ No (If yes, please describe)

---

---

---

f. Are you interested in receiving any additional vocational or job-related training?

☐ Yes ☐ No (If yes, please describe)

---

---

---

---

---

g. What would keep you from seeking vocational or job-related training?

☐ lack of money

☐ don't know how to go about it

☐ not sure of what I really would like or want to do

☐ no transportation

☐ child care problems

☐ family members/friends not supportive

☐ lack of self-confidence

☐ other: \_\_\_\_\_

h. How do you find it easiest for you to learn how to do something?

- ☐ listening to someone talk about it
- ☐ reading about how to do something
- ☐ watching someone else do something first, and then trying it myself
- ☐ watching films or movies
- ☐ looking at drawings or pictures
- ☐ doing it by myself until I get it right

-----  
Do not write below this line, go on to Part 4, Personal/Social Adjustment

Information Needs

Item #      Question or Comment:


(4) Personal/Social Adjustment

a. I am presently living in a: (circle)

house                      apartment                      hotel/motel                      nursing home  
rooming house                      school/hospital                      group residence

b. I am living with: (circle)

parents                      husband/wife                      relatives                      friends                      no one/alone

c. Is your present living situation adequate or satisfactory?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No (check why not, you can check more than one)

\_\_\_\_\_ No transportation

\_\_\_\_\_ Noisy

\_\_\_\_\_ Too expensive

\_\_\_\_\_ Too small

\_\_\_\_\_ Dirty, poorly maintained

\_\_\_\_\_ Poor location

\_\_\_\_\_ No kitchen/cooking

\_\_\_\_\_ Inadequate heating

\_\_\_\_\_ Other people-related problems

d. Is there bus or other public transportation close to where you live?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

e. Is there shopping, churches, movie theaters, etc., close by? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

f. Do you have a driver's license? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_\_\_ Regular operator's

\_\_\_\_\_ Chauffeur's

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Restrictions \_\_\_\_\_

g. Do you have a vehicle that you can use for work, shopping, appointments, etc.? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes                      \_\_\_\_\_ No



h. What is (are) your present source(s) of income?

Monthly Amount

Source

Self (savings, work)

Family/spouse

Social Security (SSI/SSDI)

Disability insurance

Public Assistance

Other

i. How much money do you need to cover your living expenses and any debts you may have?

\$\_\_\_\_\_ per week or \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month

j. Do you currently have any judgements or legal actions pending against you?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No (If yes, please explain)

k. Are you receiving or in need of any legal advice or assistance?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

l. List any other social service agencies or organizations that you are receiving assistance from:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

m. Are you responsible for the care/well-being of any minor children, disabled or elderly individuals?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No (If yes, please indicate name, age, and relationship)

Name

Age

Relationship

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

n. Are present arrangements adequate to meet these needs?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

o. Are your family members or the people you live with helpful or supportive of you in trying to find work or obtain training?

\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No



(5) Medical/Physical

- a. Do you have any health problems (physical or mental) which require ongoing medical attention, or that affect your ability to do certain kinds of work or job?

       Yes        No

- b. Please describe your disability or handicap in your own words?

- c. Please list the name(s) and address(es) of your regular doctor or clinic

_____	Tel. _____
_____	
_____	
_____	
_____	Tel. _____
_____	
_____	

- d. Are you currently taking any medications or pills?

       Yes        No        If yes, please list:

- e. Do you use or need any of the items listed below:

<u>Items</u>	<u>Use</u>		<u>Need</u>	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Glasses	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
Dentures	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
Hearing Aid	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
Wheelchair	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
Cane/Crutches	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
Artificial Limb	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
Braces	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
Special Shoes	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>
Other (please describe)				

f. Do you have any other medical problems or needs that you currently need help with?

       Yes        No        If yes, please describe:

g. Have you been hospitalized anytime during the last three years?

       Yes        No        If yes, please give date and reason:

h. Do you have any allergies that you are aware of?

       Yes        No        If yes, please describe:

i. Do you have or have you had in the past, convulsions, seiquesters, blackout spells?

       Yes        No        If yes, when was the last such spell and how frequently do they occur:

j. When was your last complete medical exam?

Date        Month        Day        Year

k. What are your present height and weight?

Height        ft.        in. Weight        lbs.

Is this + or - 5 lbs. different from your usual or normal weight?

       Yes        No

l. Do you use alcoholic beverages or tobacco?

Alcohol        Yes        No How often        /day

Tobacco        Yes        No How often        /day

-----  
Do not write below this line, go on to Part 6, Vocational Interests/Goals

Information Needs

Item #      Question or Comment




(6) Vocational Interests/Goals

- a. In what jobs or occupations would you like to find work? List most important job first:

Occupation

Occupation

Occupation

Occupation

Occupation

Occupation

- b. If you are willing to move to get a job, where would you move to?  
Please list:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- c. What type of work do you want?

\_\_\_\_\_ Permanent \_\_\_\_\_ Temporary \_\_\_\_\_ Casual \_\_\_\_\_ Any

- d. What hours would you like?

\_\_\_\_\_ Full-time \_\_\_\_\_ Part-time \_\_\_\_\_ Either

- e. Are there hours you would prefer to work? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

IF ~~yes~~ what are they? From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

- f. What shifts would you work?

_____ Days only	_____ Days and nights	_____ Days, evenings, and nights
_____ Evenings only	_____ Days and evenings	
_____ Nights only	_____ Evenings and nights	

- g. What are the minimum wage/earnings you will accept? \$ \_\_\_\_\_ /wk.

- h. Are you willing and able to do: (check all appropriate)

- S \_\_\_\_\_ Sedentary Work - involving sitting and walking and occasionally lifting small articles weighing up to 10 pounds
- L \_\_\_\_\_ Light Work - involving frequent lifting and/or carrying of items up to 10 lbs. and occasionally, up to 20 lbs.
- M \_\_\_\_\_ Medium Work - involving frequent lifting and/or carrying of items up to 20 lbs. and occasionally up to 50 lbs.
- H \_\_\_\_\_ Heavy Work - involving frequent lifting and/or carrying of objects up to 50 lbs.; occasional lifting and/or carrying of up to 100 lbs.

- i. Are you willing and able to to work requiring that you do the following activities regularly? (check all appropriate)

       Climbing, and/or balancing (on ladders, scaffolds, etc.)

       Standing (for long periods)

- j. Are you willing and able to work; (check all appropriate)

1        Inside/Indoors

0        Outside/Outdoors

8        Both inside and outside

2        In extremes of cold with temperature changes

3        In extremes of heat with temperature changes

4        In wet or humid conditions

5        Near noise or vibration

6        Near fumes, dust, mist, gases or in a poorly ventilated area

- k. What things are most important to you in a job? (Please number most important #1, next most important #2, etc.)

       Wages/money

       The people I work with

       The nature of the work/job itself

       Location of the job in relation to residence

       The amount of freedom or working under minimum supervision

       Fringe benefits (vacation, insurance, etc.)

       The work environment (nice clean place, modern, safe, friendly atmosphere,)

- l. Do you think that you have enough training, work experience, skills, education to get the kind of job that you want?

Training        Yes        No

Work experience        Yes        No

Skills        Yes        No

Education        Yes        No

-----  
Do not write below this line, go on to Part 7, Job-seeking Experience

Information Needs

Item #      Question or Comment


(7) Job-Seeking Experience

a. When was the last time you actively looked for a job?

- ☒ Within the last two weeks  
☐ Within the last month  
☐ Within the past three months  
☐ Within the past six months  
☐ Sometime during the past year  
☐ Haven't looked

b. How many employers have you personally contacted in the process of looking for a job? (Best estimate if not exactly sure)

Number of employer contacts \_\_\_\_\_

c. Have you been successful in getting interviews?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, how many interviews have you had?

Number of interviews \_\_\_\_\_

d. What reasons have employers given you for not hiring you?

e. How have you found out about job openings? (Please check any that you have used)

- ☐ State or public employment service  
☐ Vocational rehabilitation agency  
☐ Reading newspaper "help wanted" ads  
☐ From family members  
☐ From friends or neighbors  
☐ By looking up employers in the phone book  
☐ Listening to the radio or television  
☐ Private employment agencies  
☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

f. What have been your biggest problems in looking for a job? (You may check more than one)

- ☐ Finding out about job openings  
☐ Transportation  
☐ Getting employers to interview me  
☐ Going through the interview itself, "selling" myself by talking to employers  
☐ Employer bias or prejudice  
☐ Lack of work experience  
☐ Not enough education  
☐ Lack of work skills  
☐ Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

g. What have you done so far in looking for a job?

Have you completed application forms? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did you have any difficulties? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what were your difficulties?

h. Have you written a resume or a summary of your work qualifications?

☐ Yes ☐ No If no, these questions may give you some idea of what is required.

If yes, does it include:

- your name, address and phone number? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- your occupation or job objective? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- an outline or list of your relevant education, training and licences, diplomas, or certificates? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- an outline of your work experiences relevant to the job objective? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is it neatly typed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

i. Have you written letters of application? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, do they include:

If no, these questions may help you write one in the future.

- your reason for writing the employer? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- a summary of your qualifications? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- where you can be reached to arrange an appointment ☐ Yes ☐ No

-----  
Do not write below this line; to be completed by interviewer

Information Needs

Item #      Question or Comment:




### Client Involvement

a. Do you understand the reasons why you are being referred for services?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

b. What do you hope to gain or how would you hope to benefit from services?

Comments:

c. Do you have any questions or concerns that you would like to have answered or clarified?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Comments:

d. What is your reaction to the tour and orientation to services?

Comments:

Client's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

Month      Day      Year

Interviewed By \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name and Position

Form Completed By \_\_\_\_\_

## Referral Information Summary

- a. Referral Date \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Referred by \_\_\_\_\_ c. Position/Title \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Address \_\_\_\_\_ e. Phone \_\_\_\_\_
- f. Stated Reason for Referral \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Presenting Problems

- \_\_\_\_\_ g. Lack of work skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ h. Limited self-help, ADL skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ i. Marginal or no work history
- \_\_\_\_\_ j. Unemployed
- \_\_\_\_\_ k. Underemployed
- \_\_\_\_\_ l. Job adjustment
- \_\_\_\_\_ m. Difficulty in interpersonal relationships
- \_\_\_\_\_ n. No job goal or vocational objective
- \_\_\_\_\_ o. Unrealistic goal or vocational objective
- \_\_\_\_\_ p. Limited physical mobility
- \_\_\_\_\_ q. Health/physical stamina
- \_\_\_\_\_ r. Lack of transportation
- \_\_\_\_\_ s. Inadequate residential/living situation
- \_\_\_\_\_ t. Community/social adjustment
- 

## Information Needs

<u>Item #</u>	<u>Question or Comment</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## Analyzing Information in Order to Develop Evaluation Questions

As mentioned previously in this publication, the process of gathering comprehensive, vocational information about an individual should be much more than a clerical exercise. If the information does not serve a useful purpose or is not needed, then it should not be collected in the first place. Thus far, the reasons why client information is important have been discussed, the seven categories useful in planning have been described, and a tool for recording client information has been presented. Most of this relates specifically to the process of information-gathering itself. However, once the information is collected, it must be closely analyzed in order to identify areas of client need. These areas of need in turn will be rephrased as evaluation questions which will be used in developing the individualized evaluation plan. In other words, the evaluation questions will determine the scope and direction of an individual's vocational evaluation.

Ideally, as indicated previously, the basic referral questions should be presented to the facility by the referral source. However, when for one reason or another, the referring counselor fails to accept this responsibility, it becomes the facility's task, together with the client, to determine more specifically the exact direction in which services, i.e., vocational evaluation, will proceed. Once again, it is under such circumstances that the compilation and analysis of client information becomes even more important.

Through review of the form or the referral information, client information needs are identified which can then be rephrased as questions to be considered in planning or answered through vocational evaluation. Actually there are two different kinds of questions that may be developed as a result of analyzing the information. The most important questions are those that must be answered through the vocational evaluation itself; these are the referral or evaluation questions. However, there may also be other questions developed from incomplete or missing information that are important, but which can be answered by methods other than the evaluation process. An example may be helpful in illustrating this difference. Referring to the MDC Structured Information Form once again, questions of either type can be initially recorded in the "Information Need" space that immediately follows each section of the form. For the sake of continuity, an example previously cited is again presented as follows:

### Information Needs

<u>Item #</u>	<u>Question or Comment</u>
---------------	----------------------------

2n.	What specific problems did Thelma have in getting along with people in her former jobs?
-----	---

Instead of making a simple notation such as, "problems in getting along with people in previous jobs," the problem is stated as a question requiring additional investigation. However, the question as stated is really not an evaluation question as such, as it can be answered by contacting Thelma's former employers rather than through the evaluation process. This same problem, however, can also yield an evaluation question such as, "How does she relate to and get along with people in a work situation?" In other words, what are her present interpersonal skills and behaviors? Both types of questions are important, but this individual's present behavior and functioning can be best determined through observations made during the evaluation.

itself. These observations can then be contrasted with information obtained via contacts with her former employers. Thus, by combining the two sources of information, greater insight is developed regarding the nature of the problem. This will be very helpful in preparing a plan of action to assist the individual.

Use of the "Information Need" space for writing the question is really a matter of personal preference. Whether the question should always be written in this space is immaterial; the important point is that through identification and analysis of missing or unclear information, questions are formulated which will structure the development of the individual evaluation plan. These questions and any sub-questions should be rewritten on the plan itself. The identification of specific client information needs greatly facilitates this process. (Persons desiring additional information are directed to The Individual Evaluation Plan, Paul McCray, MDC, 1978.)

### Examples of Additional Evaluation Questions

Because this concept is so important to developing effective individual evaluation plans, additional examples are provided on the following pages. These examples are presented according to the information categories on the structured information form; for each information category, a number of examples are given. Not every example is an evaluation or referral question per se; as was described in the previous section, some important information can be obtained from resources or methods outside of the vocational evaluation process itself. In order to further illustrate the difference between the two types of questions, additional examples of these secondary questions are also presented. To aid in distinguishing which is which, the evaluation questions are followed by the letters (EQ) in parentheses. The secondary type of questions are left unmarked.

It is important to keep in mind that in most instances, there will be more than one evaluation question which can be developed from an item of information or single information descriptor. In other words, each major referral or evaluation question can also lead to a number of sub-questions which will need to be answered before the initial or primary question itself can be answered.

(1) DEMOGRAPHIC/IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Item #	Information Descriptor	Question
1b.	Client is not aware if he has a Social Security account number. He does not have a card in his possession, but thinks that he had one at one time. He will need a Social Security number before he starts working.	Has a Social Security account number ever been assigned?
1c.	When asked, she cannot accurately give her address and telephone number.	Can she learn to recall this information from memory? What teaching strategies might prove to be effective? (EO)
1j.	Client indicates that he was dishonorably discharged from the army for fighting. He says he resents being told what to do.	How does he respond to various supervisory styles in a work setting? (EQ)



(2) WORK HISTORY

Item #	Information Descriptor	Question
2a.	Client's most recent employment has been in cement construction as an air hammer operator. He injured his back on the job, and his doctor says that he can do no heavy lifting. He maintains that he wants to return to his job as an air hammer operator, although this may be a matter of ego rather than a realistic decision.	What are some less physically demanding jobs to which he can transfer his skills and experience acquired as an air hammer operator? (EQ)
2a.	She left her previous job because of a disagreement with her supervisor; she claims that the supervisor was "snooping" and checking up on her all the time. She says that she doesn't like the feeling that someone is looking over her shoulder.	How does she relate to authority figures in a work situation? Is this a generalized problem or specific to that particular supervisor? (EQ)
2m.	He says that he lost his job because he was late for work too often (about twice a week on the average). He overstayed because he forgot to set his alarm clock.	Is punctuality a problem during vocational evaluation, and does he understand the importance of being on time for work? (EQ)
2l.	On a previous job, he missed work at least twice a month because he scheduled medical appointments during work hours. He says there were no other times when he could make these appointments.	Is client's medical condition so serious that frequent doctor's visits are required or necessary?
2g.	Client liked his former job as a construction worker because he enjoyed working outside. He doesn't think he can "hack" an indoor job, and says that he would rather collect welfare.	What areas of outdoor work is he capable of engaging in in view of his present physical capacities and limitations? (EQ)
2m.	She says that she enjoyed her job at a nursing home, but was forced to quit because she couldn't find a reliable babysitter for her 15 month old son.	What options are available for assisting her in locating and securing reliable child care services?

### (3) EDUCATION/TRAINING

Item #	Information Descriptor	Question
3a.	She quit high school before completing her junior year. She wants to work as a typist, but has not been able to find a job because she doesn't have her high school diploma.	Is she interested in and willing to finish high school or obtain a general equivalency diploma? Does she have the aptitude to become a successful typist? (EQ)
3g.	Client has a cardiac condition and says that he wants to go back to school to study accounting. However, he doesn't know if he can "handle" the work, and is concerned that it would be too much pressure for him.	Does this individual have the aptitude and ability to successfully complete accounting course work? (EQ) What are physical limitations as indicated by pulmonary stress evaluation?
3d.	Client says that he received training as a diesel mechanic in the military, and that he can fix "anything on wheels." He doesn't feel that he needs any more training in order to work as a truck mechanic.	Can he perform diesel mechanics at a competitive level? (EQ)
3b.	She indicates that she would like to be an accounting clerk, but math was not one of her better subjects in high school.	Is her choice of accounting clerk realistic in view of her math skills and aptitude? What level of math skills is needed in order to be hired as an accounting clerk? (EQ)
3h.	She is interested in being a secretary, but is worried about going to school for training because she says she does not do well in a classroom or academic type of setting.	Does she have the ability to successfully complete a secretarial training program? (EQ) Will anxiety interfere with her performance? (EQ)

(4) PERSONAL/SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

Item #	Information Descriptor	Question
4a.	Client recently found out that she has multiple sclerosis, and she has decided that she wants to get out of the house and "do something." However, even though they do not have children, her husband wants her to stay home and is not in favor of his wife going to work.	Will she be able to follow through on a rehabilitation plan without her husband's support? What alternatives are available which can help in reaching a compromise?
4c.	He lives in a rooming house where he does not have cooking privileges. He has been eating in restaurants, but is finding that it is getting too expensive.	If facilities can be found, is client able to shop for food and prepare his own meals? (EQ)
4j.	Client is currently on probation for shoplifting a portable radio. She is reluctant to talk about it as she doesn't feel that it is anyone's business but her own.	Can she learn to constructively handle this issue in employment interviews? (EQ)
4h.	She says that she would like to work, but she doesn't think she can earn enough to meet the needs of her family.	What are her financial needs and which jobs can she perform that are consistent with meeting these needs? (EQ)
4d.	Client is in a wheelchair, lives two miles outside of city limits, and does not drive. The workshop is currently providing transportation. However, he has the potential to be employed as an assembler in a local electronics plant.	Is obtaining a driver's license a realistic goal for this individual? (EQ) Are other transportation alternatives available?

(5) MEDICAL/PHYSICAL

Item #	Information Descriptor	Question
5a.	Client says that she doesn't think that she can work because she tires so easily. She maintains that she needs to lay down to rest her back several times a day.	How long can she work at a sedentary job without tiring? How long can she stand? Which combinations of activities impose the optimal working conditions for her? (EQ)
5i.	He says that he has periodic "black-out" spells where he will lose consciousness for 10-15 minutes. However, his EEG is within "normal" limits and he is not taking anti-convulsant medication. There appears to be no medical reason for these spells. He says employers won't hire him once he tells them about these "spells."	What is the frequency of these "spells" in a work situation, how long do they last, and what, if anything, appears to bring them on? (EQ) Are spells under clients conscious control for purposes of gaining attention? (EQ)
5k.	He weighs 100 pounds over his recommended weight even though he says that he is continuously on a diet. In looking for work as an orderly, he feels that he has been discriminated against because of his weight. People of similar size and weight have been successfully placed.	Is his weight a major obstacle to finding employment in the health care field? Is his weight the major problem or are there other problems or behaviors interfering with his being hired? (EQ)
5e.	She had to quit her job as an electronics assembler because her eyes bothered her--burning and itching--after doing such small work for more than two hours at a time. She has just had an eye examination and was told that she has a bad case of eye strain.	What jobs would be consistent with her assembly skills, but not cause her problems with her eyes? (EQ)
5a.	In spite of recent back surgery, client says that he is unwilling to do anything except his former job as a heavy equipment operator. His doctor has told him that he cannot return to this job.	What alternatives are there for less rigorous work where he could transfer his interests and skills from heavy equipment operation? (EQ)

(6) VOCATIONAL INTERESTS/GOALS

Item #	Information Descriptor	Question
6a.	She has never worked before, not even part-time, and she says that she has no idea what kind of job she would be good at doing.	How do her interests as measured by standard interest tests compare with her skills and interests as shown on work samples and subcontract work performance? (EQ)
6j.	Client worked one summer as what he refers to as a "forest ranger." He says that he wants to do "outdoor" work and that he is not willing to work indoors.	What are the alternatives for full-time "outdoor" work in this region that would be consistent with his skill level and training? (EQ)
6b.	Client says that she has always been fascinated with computers, but has had no experience or training in this field. She sees it as being a good field for the future based on some reading she has done.	What is her specific interest (programming, repair, etc.) and would she be likely to succeed in a training program? (EQ)
6f.	Because he depends on others to provide his transportation, he is willing to work days only even though job openings for day shift work are scarce at this time.	If day shift work cannot be located, what alternatives are available for arranging transportation that would coincide with other work shifts?
6i.	Client wants to be a medical laboratory technician, but is not aware that she does not have the education and training necessary to be hired for this position.	What are the education and training requirements for this position, what options for training are available, and does she have the ability to benefit from a training program? (EQ)



(7) JOB-SEEKING EXPERIENCE

Item #	Information Descriptor	Question
7b.	He says that he has been actively looking for work, but has contacted only four employers in the past three months. He feels that he is qualified for the jobs he has applied for, and can't understand why he hasn't been hired.	What are his job interview skills like? Does he know how to make use of existing resources in locating potential openings? Is he really qualified for the jobs he is applying for?
7f.	She is quite fearful of entering into unfamiliar experiences. She finds it difficult to talk with employers, particularly men. As a result, she avoids looking for work.	Can she improve her interviewing skills and self-confidence through the use of role playing and video-tape feedback? (EQ)
7g.	Client is extremely reluctant to apply for work on his own because he is unable to complete application forms without help.	What intervention strategies will be needed in assisting the client to apply for employment? (EQ)
7f.	He says that he has looked for work for the past six months without success. He blames employers for being prejudiced against handicapped people, even though he has applied with some companies that have good reputations for hiring and training disabled people.	How does the client explain his disability in job interviews? (EQ) Does his interview behavior cause employers to react negatively towards him?
7b.	She says that she has been averaging six employer contacts a week for the last month, but has been successful in gaining an interview only twice.	How is she selecting the jobs for which she is applying? Is she qualified for these jobs?

## Suggestions For Using This Material

The information and concepts presented in this manuscript can only be helpful to the extent that facility personnel put them into use. It is suggested that once the material has been closely scrutinized, existing facility procedures and materials be reviewed in order to determine how effectively the needs outlined in this publication are presently being met. In some cases, it may be decided that current information-gathering and review procedures, as well as evaluation planning, are being adequately carried out. In others, this scrutiny may lead to the conclusion that improvements in these practices can and should be made. Once this has been determined, the next step is to develop procedures and methods which the facility staff feel will be effective for their clients and situation. This may consist of using the material in this publication as is, using it with revisions, or developing new materials based on the concepts and principles described. The materials used for implementation are secondary to the process itself. In other words, how things are done is not as important as what is actually accomplished. Each facility has to develop procedures that staff will use and find helpful. Otherwise staff resistance can undermine the effective implementation of any new approach. Along with this, it stands to reason that staff should receive thorough information and training regarding the purposes and goals of any new concepts and procedures prior to implementation. A series of in-service meetings may be necessary in order to make adequate preparations.

It has been emphasized repeatedly throughout this publication that it is the referring counselor's responsibility to provide the facility with thorough referral information including the specific referral or evaluation questions that are to be addressed. However, in order to do this consistently, referring counselors must see their role in its proper perspective, must see the value of the process in terms of improved service delivery for clients, and must be willing to accept the corresponding responsibility. This in turn requires that referral sources have a good understanding of what individual facilities can do for their clients. Counselors must also know their clients well in order to match their needs with appropriate facility services. It almost seems like this should be taken for granted as being representative of current practice in the field. It should be, and in some cases, probably is; however, in many others, referrals continue to be made haphazardly.

What can facilities do to improve this situation? The first thing that can be done is to bring the problem to the attention of the referring counselors. This can be somewhat of a "thorny" problem since facilities are dependent on state agency counselors for referrals. In many instances, the situation may have to be handled with a great deal of tact in order to avoid misunderstandings. It should be approached constructively, the point being that clients can be better served as the result of everyone working together to make the needed improvements. Accusations of negligence or irresponsibility will do no one any good, and will only serve to damage referral source/facility relations.

The facility then has a responsibility to evaluate itself first in order to determine its own effectiveness in these areas. It also has a responsibility to establish an ongoing dialogue with referring counselors in order to discuss the problems and proposed solutions. This dialogue should include actual in-service training for referring counselors to insure that they understand the services that are provided and how these services can assist their

clients. They must understand the reasons why the facility needs complete referral information, and especially the importance of stating specific referral questions whenever possible. As a result of this kind of dialogue, it is anticipated that referring counselors will have a better appreciation of their role in making facility referrals on behalf of their clients.

Even if the desired results are achieved, this does not mean that the evaluator's responsibility for analyzing the referral information is lessened. As a result of this scrutiny and discussions with the client, it is likely that, in many cases, additional referral or evaluation questions will be identified. Once again, these should be communicated back to the referring counselor for approval. However, as a result of receiving complete referrals with specific questions, the evaluator's task should be simplified considerably, saving time and effort in the development of an effective individual evaluation plan.

Listed below are some tentative steps for using the information contained in this publication. These are only suggestions and each facility should use its own discretion in deciding on the most effective way of implementing this material in its own unique situation:

1. Review of publication by director/coordinator of rehabilitation services, chief evaluator, or other key person.
2. Review by other involved staff (may need duplicate copies).
3. Staff meeting to discuss contents of publication and compare with present procedures and methods by which needs are presently being met.
4. Implementation of trial period in order to test materials or revised materials.
5. Meeting to review implementation; suggestions for change or revision.
6. Meeting and in-service with referring counselors; discussions of referring counselor's role and responsibilities in making referrals including good referral questions.
7. Full implementation.
8. Follow-up meeting with referring counselors for discussion and evaluation of referral and planning procedures.

#### Summary

This publication has been written to provide referring agency and rehabilitation facility personnel with concepts and examples illustrating the importance of gathering and using complete referral information in the planning of vocational evaluation services. Ideally, the referral source should provide the facility with all necessary referral information so that the planning process can be conducted in a structured and efficient manner. Preferably, carrying this one step further, the referring counselor should indicate the specific information being sought; usually this is done in the form of

specific referral questions. However, in many cases, for a variety of reasons, the referring counselor neglects to furnish either comprehensive information or referral questions. In addition, when presented, referral questions may be lacking in specificity to the point that they are not really useful in planning.

When this situation occurs, it becomes the responsibility of the facility staff to develop or secure the needed information. By having and using a structured procedure for doing this, the task of information gathering is less difficult and time-consuming. The primary benefactor, however, is the client or recipient of services, who will be involved in a rehabilitation program which is efficient, coordinated and planned to meet individual needs. The referring agency should also benefit as a result of less client time spent in services as well as from improvements in the outcomes of facility referrals. In other words, the referral source should receive better, more useful information in a shorter period of time. In addition, the use of similar procedures by a facility should serve in the long run to educate referring agencies as to the value of providing complete referral information, and whenever possible, asking specific referral questions. This is the referring counselor's responsibility and the facility should not necessarily accept it as its own without attempting to educate referral sources as to planning procedures which facilitate the delivery of client-centered services.

This publication has essentially been promoting a concept or principle. The specific procedures and examples given may not be the "best" methods for each and every facility. As with every MDC product, facility personnel are encouraged to modify these materials to meet their own individual needs. In addition, the MDC is always interested in receiving suggestions for improving MDC materials. If your facility has a procedure or approach that works well for you and your clients, we would certainly like to receive a copy so that it can be reviewed for possible distribution to other facility personnel. Individuals submitting contributions are assured that their materials will not be used by the MDC without prior approval, and full and proper credit will be given to the contributor. The MDC's goal continues to be to provide facilities with procedures, materials, and resources designed to assist them in improving the delivery of vocational evaluation and work adjustment services. Many contributions from facility personnel have helped in achieving this goal.

## References

Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, Standards manual for rehabilitation facilities. Chicago, Illinois: Author, 1978.

Employment and Immigration Canada, Occupational and Career Analysis and Development Branch, PLACE: Guided steps to employment readiness. Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: Author, 1977.

McCray, P., The individual evaluation plan. Menomonie, Wisconsin: Materials Development Center, Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute, University of Wisconsin-Stout, 1978. (Available from the MDC for \$1.50)

Sturm, T., Otto, N., & Bakeman, M., Vocational diagnostic interviewing. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Minneapolis Rehabilitation Center, 1972.